

VZCZCXRO7789
RR RUEHDE RUEHPA
DE RUEHOS #1120/01 2341656
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 221656Z AUG 06
FM AMCONSUL LAGOS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7815
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHHH/OPEC COLLECTIVE
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 7753
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0181
RUEHDL/AMEMBASSY DUBLIN 0025
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0690
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 0030
RULSDMK/DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION WASHDC
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUEAHLC/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC
RUEAAIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH AFB UK
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 001120

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS GPERSON AND CGAY
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/18/2016
TAGS: [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [CASC](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: DELTA SITREP #6

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for Reasons 1.4 (D & E)

¶1. (C) Rivers Governor Odili and other GON officials continue to voice optimism the hostages will be released soon. The latest forecast is for a dawn release tomorrow, August 22. (Comment: We would be unduly credulous if we accepted this forecast as gospel. Previously, Odili predicted the hostages would be released on Saturday, then Sunday. Thus, we do not put great weight in the time frame given. However, Odili and the GON officials seem more optimistic than they were a few days ago. End Comment.)

¶2. (C) The Director of the SSS in Rivers State continues to head the negotiations with the kidnappers. The SSS also continues to state the kidnappers' demands are solely monetary. The security consultants of the affected companies have crafted proof of life (POL) questions to pass to the kidnappers. However, the SSS has been reticent to relay these questions, asserting their objective was to achieve a quick release. Evidently, the SSS believes transmitting the questions and other material such as letters from the families would be establishing a relationship with the hostage takers that could encourage temporizing. (Comment: Apart from the SSS description of the hostage takers' demands as completely pecuniary we have no other information about the demands. The takers have not issued any public statements. The reluctance of the SSS to utilize the POL questions is disappointing. The private security companies will make another attempt to confer with SSS about the utility of establishing proof of life. End Comment.)

Military Cordon and Search Operation

¶3. (C) Nigerian military personnel conducted a cordon and search operation in a high-crime area of Port Harcourt on August 18. The area is a haven of gang members and Ijaw militants, who are often one and the same. The military sweep resulted in

approximately 100 arrests. It was originally reported by contacts in Port Harcourt that German hostage, Julius Berger employee Guido Schiffaiph, was freed during this operation. However, Mr. Schiffaiph's release was not linked to the operation. Mr. Schiffaiph was released that evening but was voluntarily turned over by his captors to Rivers State Government personnel. He was never held in Port Harcourt but was at a location a 2-3 hour boat trip away from the city. His release was facilitated by Senator David Brigidi of Bayelsa State. (Note: Brigidi has significant access and influence within Ijaw youth groups in Bayelsa State. Apparently his influence also extends into Port Harcourt. End Note.)

¶4. (C) The military launched its August 18 operation reportedly because of suspected weapons caches in the area. Governor Odili stated this operation was taken to improve urban security and to signal to gangs and militants that they would no longer be allowed to ply their trade in Port Harcourt with impunity. He intimated that further operations were in store. We stressed the importance of taking no action endangering the hostages. Ijaw activist Oronto Douglas told us rumors were spreading through the Ijaw community in Port Harcourt that authorities had mistreated some of the arrestees. (Comment: The need to improve security in Port Harcourt is beyond obvious. However, the timing of this military sweep is questionable as it could make the kidnappers even more reluctant to free their captives particularly should rumors spread that those arrested have been mistreated. End Comment.)

¶5. (U) There is an increased law enforcement presence and more checkpoints in Port Harcourt. However, no curfew has been imposed.

LAGOS 00001120 002 OF 002

Bayelsa Fire Fight

¶6. (C) Secretary of State Government for Bayelsa, Dr. Godknows Igali, informed us of an unfortunate fire fight that occurred last night. A community group had pressured some local youths to release a Nigerian national employed by Shell who they had held for several days. On the way to handing over the hostage, the convoy happened upon a military patrol. Several people were killed in the ensuing firefight, according to Igali. This will further complicate government negotiations with militant groups, he lamented. (Note: This was the first information that a shell employee was taken hostage. End Note.)

CONSULAR

¶7. (C) Looking toward the hostages' eventual release, the companies and security contractors are working closely with the diplomatic missions to pre-arrange the logistics for returning the hostages to Lagos and then out of Nigeria for repatriation. Edison Chouste plans to return Amcit Royce Anthony to Chattanooga, Tennessee, upon his release.

BROWNE